

3c6

## Group in a Community Venue

### Do

Staff arrange a group which meets in its own room in a mainstream community building.

### Story

A day service for people with learning disabilities in Gateshead is based in its own rooms in a community centre. Almost every mainstream group in the community centre has at least one person with a learning disability attending in their own right.

In another place, moving the women's group from the day centre to a community centre gave the participants an opportunity to see what other activities happened in the community centre and to use its café and other facilities. Over a few months, members of the group were supported to join in with other activities at the community centre, including a mainstream women's group.

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### Hints & Hazards

Sometimes the group becomes socially isolated, despite meeting in the same building as other users. This can be tackled in a variety of ways. People attending other activities in the venue can be invited to join the group for coffee or other occasional events. Longer term links can be built if there is an opportunity for shared projects between the disabled group and other groups in the venue. If using volunteering, avoid casting the disabled people in the role of passive recipients.

A separate group within a community setting does not equal inclusion, nor will it necessarily lead to inclusion, so look for opportunities to build further connections. Choose a venue that is as close as possible to people's homes so that they can more easily make use of the venue at other times.

Where the group uses a space that is simultaneously in use by others, it is a Cabaret Table Group - see 7a1. The group could be led by its members, who pool their direct payments or personal budgets to pay the costs of running the group.